

The THOREAU SOCIETY BULLETIN

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THE BALZAC SCHWENK III THOREAU LIMERICKS
Transcribed by Thomas F. O'Donnell

Transcriber's Note: I have recently been appointed literary executor of the estate of Balzac Schwenk III (1880-1974), the Sage of Town Pump, a hamlet on Route 36 in upstate New York. We'll all miss Schwenk, of course, and be grateful to him for his four-volume Concordance to the Novels of Horatio Alger; unfortunately, the masterpiece he was preparing will probably never be completed--a translation into Anglo-Saxon of the complete works of Marietta Holley. He had got only about half way through Samantha at Saratoga when the end came. Too bad, because his Mercian is (or was) impeccable. But to the point. The other day, while starting to examine his papers with a view to cataloging them, I found indisputable evidence that Schwenk was a Thoreauvian at heart. Mixed in with his carelessly filed manuscripts I found a number of limericks about Thoreau. Schwenk's originals are written in a hand that few people could decipher, so I took the trouble to transcribe them. I suspect that a thorough examination of Schwenk's notes and unpublished works will occupy me for the next twenty years, and there are probably more Thoreau limericks in the mass.

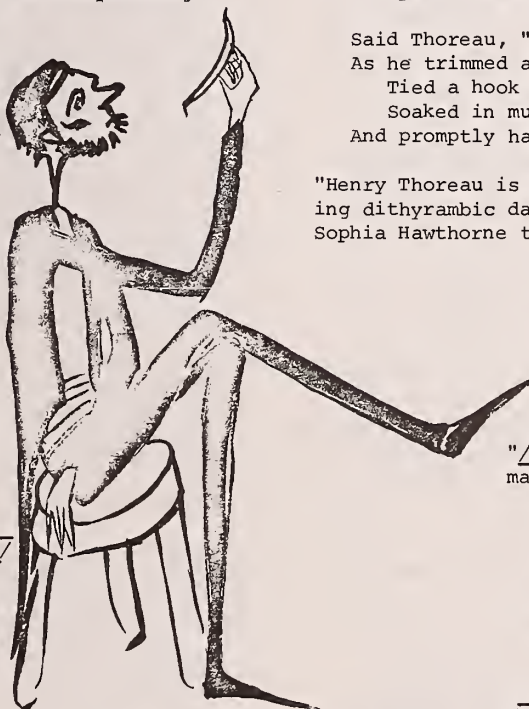
1.
Thoreau's hen, as a practical joke,
Laid an egg with a lavender yolk;

Thoreau wrapped it in cotton
Until it was rotten
And threw it at President Polk. (1936)

2.
"Thoreau played with much expression on the flute..."--S.E. Rena

"Often Henry would...catch up his flute, and...it was a delight...to listen to the silvery tones that breathed from the instrument." Anon.

Thoreau had his own magic flute
That he shaped from an old rubber boot.
It allowed him to play
Mozart's Rondo in A



Thoreau contemplating the harvest
by Annie Dillard

While he puffed on a nine-inch cheroot. (1941)
3.

"It was under the roof of old city hall Of Worcester, Mass. and to an audience of less than 100 persons, that his famous lecture on 'Beans' was delivered.... His lectures in Worcester were never well attended...." Worcester Telegram, 26 Oct. 1896.

In all of the city of Worcester
Poor Thoreau had scarcely a borcester.
When he lectured on 'Beans'
They sneered at his jeans
And paid him with one scrawny rorcester. (1946?)

4.
Said Thoreau, "I'll show you a trick,"
As he trimmed a long hickory stick,
Tied a hook to a line
Soaked in muscatel wine,
And promptly hauled in Moby-Dick. (undated. ca 1947?)

5.
"Henry Thoreau is an experienced skater, and was figuring dithyrambic dances and Bacchic leaps on the ice...." Sophia Hawthorne to Mrs. Caleb Foote.

Thoreau was a marvel on skates
And excelled at reverse figure-eights.
With loud shouts of "Huzzah!"
He'd perform entrechats
While he juggled four thirty-pound weights. (1948)

6.
"Thoreau had a strong dislike of matrimony." F.P. Stearns

Thoreau, the misogynist Yankee,
Claimed that women and girls made him cranky,
So both brunette and blonde
He barred from his pond
To make sure there was no hanky-panky. (1948)

7.
Note how the sentiment implied in the following early limerick, dating from about 1915, contrasts with that of the above, #6/

Said Thoreau to Hawthorne, "Come in,
And we'll have a long talk about sin;
But before I say more---
When you came to the door
I was hoping you'd brought Hester Prynne."

Editor's Note: Since discovering the above Schwenk limericks, his executor has found a second batch and writes of them: The heirs of Balzac Schwenk III have asked me to thank you for your reaction to the Thoreau limericks written secretly by the lamented Sage of Town

Pump, as he is known here. Schwenk's only living sibling, Miss Scheherazade Schwenk (we call her "Sherry") was especially happy to learn that you found merit in her brother's verse. Then she went on to say--in words that I reluctantly record, but they are part of the record--"But them are only the clean ones; I bet the old s-o-b wrote some dirty ones, and I hope you find 'em." I replied carefully (Sherry is 89) that I certainly hoped that I didn't find any dirty ones--that if I did, I'd burn them immediately so that Schwenk's reputation would not be sullied. Well, Sherry was right. Apparently Schwenk had a side that none except his sister recognized. First I discovered (folded between pages of Schwenk's copy of Jonathan Edwards' Freedom of the Will) the two limericks numbered 8 and 9 attached. These did not disturb me. But then, hidden carefully in a well-thumbed copy of Fanny Hill (which was itself hidden so that Sherry couldn't find it) I discovered three more limericks of quite a different kind. My first impulse was, of course, to destroy them immediately. I know, of course, that they are unprintable, and I blushed as I read them. But after thinking about it for some time, I decided that I should at least send them to you; at least one other person would know that Balzac Schwenk was not at all times the scholarly saint some of his admirers make him out to be. And, after all, this is not any penny-ante scribbler we're dealing with: it's Balzac Schwenk III./

8.

"Thoreau once put cloth bandages on the claws of Mrs. Emerson's hens, that good lady having been sorely tried by her fowls invading the family flower patch."--The Minneapolis Tribune, undated clipping. Repr. Thoreau: Man of Concord, p. 72.

When her hens threatened Lidian's phlox
She tried vainly to shoot them with rocks.
Thoreau bandaged their claws
With surgical gauze,
And promptly came down with the pox! (1957)

9.

"Thoreau loved to swim underwater and explore the bottom of Walden Pond."--Anon. /possibly Schwenk himself?/. Town Pump Dial, 27 June 1943.

One evening, indulging a whim,
Thoreau went for a scuba-dive swim;
He came up with a cheer,
Margaret Fuller's brassiere,
And the carcass of A. Gordon Pym.

/Editor's Note: Unfortunately, the final three limericks were of such a nature that their publication must be postponed until we issue an x-rated bulletin./

THE HERMIT DAYS OF HENRY THOREAU AND THOMAS MERTON by William Bly

The spirit of Henry Thoreau found its way into the writing of Thomas Merton, contemplative monk and contemporary writer. It's fitting that a Trappist monk should feel a close association with Thoreau. Thomas Merton had a longstanding interest in cabins and solitude. It was only natural that he talked of Henry David Thoreau. Merton wrote of Thoreau:

"Thoreau sat in his cabin and criticized the railways. I sit in mine and wonder about a world that has, well, progressed. I must read WALDEN again, and see if Thoreau already guessed that he was part of

what he thought he could escape. But it is not a matter of "escaping." It is not even a matter of protesting very audibly. Technology is here, even in the cabin. True, the utility line is not here yet, and so G.E. is not here yet either. When the utilities and G.E. enter my cabin arm in arm it will be nobody's fault but my own." (RAIDS ON THE UNSPEAKABLE, 1966, p. 12-13)

Much of Merton's best writing comes from his last years in that cabin. He would arise like all other Trappists, around 2:30 a.m. and after the morning Vespers he would write until dawn. His hermitage of cinder block was a mile from the main building of the Gethsemane monastery in Nelson County, Kentucky.

Merton was often asked, like Thoreau, why he made the move from the community to a hermitage. He responded:

"Can't I just be in the woods at night, in the cabin, is something too excellent to be justified or explained! It just is....There are always a few people who are in the woods at night in the rain....I am one of them. We are not having fun, we are not 'having' anything...."

"Philoxenos in his ninth memo (on poverty) to dwellers in solitude says that there is no explanation and no justification for the solitary life, since it is without a law. To be a contemplative is therefore to be an outlaw. As was Christ. As was Paul."

One who is not 'alone,' says Philoxenos has not discovered his identity. (Ibid., p. 14)

These lines are from Merton's essay "Rain and the Rhinoceros," from the book RAIDS ON THE UNSPEAKABLE. The whole essay discusses solitude, the rain and how modern man abuses and wastes solitude.

Solitude has its own history, martyrs and abasements. Merton and Thoreau are part of the pure strain that inspire the rest of mankind with words and real living experiences.

Merton was never without humor and he created this dialogue:

Why live in the woods?
Well, you have to live somewhere.
Do you get lonely?
Yes, sometimes.
Are you mad at people?
No.
Are you mad at the monastery?
No.
What do you think of the future of monasticism?
Nothing. I don't think about it.
Is it true that you are practicing ZEN in secret?
Pardon me, I don't speak English.
(The True Solitude, ed. by Dean Walley, 1969, pp. 54-55)

He also spoke of his cabin experience like this, "Yet I cannot pride myself on special freedom, simply because I am living in the woods like Thoreau instead of living in the desert like St. John the Baptist. All I can answer is that I am not living 'like anybody. Or 'unlike anybody.' We all live somehow or other, and that's that. (Ibid., pp. 48-49)

"I exist under trees. I walk in the woods out of necessity. I am both a prisoner and an escaped prisoner...." (Ibid., p. 49)

"I find myself in the primordial lostness of night, solitude, forest, peace, a mind awake in the dark, looking for a light, not totally reconciled to being out of bed. A light appears, and in the light an ikon. There is now in the large darkness a small room of radiance with psalms in it. The psalms grow up silently by themselves without effort like plants in this

light...." (*Ibid.*, p. 52)

Merton's hermitage was special to him. It took years of asking the abbot for permission until he was finally given it. From this hermitage came wisdom and humor. It was Thoreau in disguise, nature in varied colors; truth piled up by time.

Thoreau and Merton preached to all men for freedom, discipline, God and the ecology of earth. They found the best of life to be derived from solitude and to be born in silence. Comparison beyond this is unimportant.

These men are America's "Desert Fathers," hermits of the woods and not so much the plains of Egypt and Israel. Perhaps in the future we will have writers describing the solitude of deep space in their hermitages on distant planets.

REPORT OF THE WALKING SOCIETY by Mary R. Fenn

It is surprising to learn how many times the Concord authors moved. Although Henry Thoreau was the only one in the group born in Concord, his family too lived in many different houses in Concord and elsewhere. In fact on Dec. 26, 1855 he sat down in a nostalgic mood and made a list in his journal of the various houses he had lived in.

He was born in the so-called Minott house on Virginia Road which was the home of his grandmother whose second husband was Jonas Minott. The house, a lovely white clapboard salt box, was built in 1678 complete with hand-hewn beams and box staircase. In 1870 however it was moved down the road to a new location and a new farmhouse built on its site which for many years was the home of Mrs. Caleb Wheeler. The bronze plaque designating Thoreau's birthplace is at this location. In the process of moving, the original house lost the long salt-box-shaped roof in the rear as well as its sheds and barn. But it still stands in the midst of cultivated fields on the old Virginia Road.

After several more moves, the Thoreau family lived in Grandfather Thoreau's house on the green until 1837. This is a charming three storey house with a mansard roof built in 1821 by the storekeeper and was attached to the store. A later storekeeper built his house on the other side of the store, also attached to it. Now the three buildings comprise the Colonial Inn.

The Parkman house on Main Street where Thoreau began his "big red journal" was removed when the library was built. The Texas house, built when Texas was annexed as a state is no longer standing, though the Thoreau Lyceum is next door.

The last house the family lived in, and indeed the house where Thoreau died, was what he called the Yellow House on Main Street. The barn was moved up against the house to accommodate the pencil making business, and later a shed was moved against the barn to give even more space. The Thoreaus added a beautiful mahogany banister railing to the front stairs, and the attic which was Henry's private domain still has the staircase rising in the middle, then separating on each side for the last few steps. The skylight he mentioned is still there. Downstairs the rooms are large with high ceilings, each room having a fireplace. Later when the Alcott family bought the house a wing was added on the south for Mr. Alcott's library. Aside from this the house remains pretty much as it was in Thoreau's day, and is greatly appreciated by the family who lives there.

A PROBLEM IN ARITHMETIC by Carl Bode

In his The Literary Manuscripts of Henry David Thoreau Professor William Howarth reports disarmingly that error and inconsistency threatened him throughout the course of his research. I can testify, on the basis of looking into his admirable book, that he warred off nearly all the threats.

But, I believe, not all. For one thing: on page 23, prefacing the section "Poems and Translations," he writes that 75 new "items" have appeared since the 1964 edition of my Collected Poems of Henry Thoreau. In the next sentence he says that 11 of the poems were new to that edition while 64 were drafts of poems already listed there. I'm not sure what makes them truly new if I've already listed them. But anyway I'm convinced that the 11 is too high. In fact if he can find more than two or three among them, I'll buy him a bottle of the best upstate New York champagne.

RESPONSE, BY THE NUMBERS by William L. Howarth

1. Professor Bode's oenology may be no better than my numerology. But if the following suits his palate, please make mine a California vintage.

2. Accuracy counts for something: my page 23 reads "75 items that have appeared since Carl Bode's landmark edition....only 11 are poems new to the edition; 64 are additional drafts of titles already listed there." Note, "75 items," not "75 new items."

3. None of the 64 "additional drafts" are listed in his Collected Poems, but for 40 of these, CP does list some other manuscript version. For the other 24, CP lists printed sources only.

4. The 64 are "truly new" in several senses: (a) they provide manuscript authority where none--or worse, only F. B. Sanborn--previously existed; (b) they create a fuller history of the poetry texts, from early to late versions; (c) they differ considerably from other versions, and--given Thoreau's placement of his poems in different published contexts--may represent new works, not just versions of a single work.

5. Our numbers game reflects strong differences in editorial rationale: in CP, Prof. Bode seeks to construct ultimate texts out of variant drafts; in the Princeton edition we will print parallel texts of the drafts. Thus, "Inspiration" will become not one but several texts, since so many different versions survive. By these lights, each manuscript is "truly new" because it represents a separate poem.

6. The count of 11 poems new to CP is too high; the actual total is 9:

- B7 "Pens to mend, and hands to guide"
- B8 "Methinks that time has reached his prime"
- B9 "Twa' Merrit Wemen"
- B14b "The Bluebirds" (8 lines not in CP)
- B61a "Anacreontics"
- B103 "Translations from Pindar"
- B162 "This is the house that I built"
- B169 "You Boston folks & Roxbury people"
- H2 (B5a) "The morning in our prime"

7. Three of these (B9, B61a, B103) were apparently excluded from CP because they are translations. Yet Thoreau's verses are free renderings of the originals, much as his own poems freely translate classic sources, like the Simonidian "light-winged Smoke" (see CP, p. 342). And one of the nine (H2) I have not actually located, as Prof. Bode could not (CP, p. 399), so I am probably unfair to label it "new to CP." But subtracting these four from the nine leaves a total of five, and my arithmetic says that exceeds the "two or three" Prof. Bode stipulated.

8. I would gladly call the wager even if we'd both agree that no book is error-free, and that errors are at times as instructive as facts.

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CURRENT THOREAU LITERATURE.....WH

Richard Fleck's, The Indians of Thoreau gives us our first sampling of excerpts from those hitherto unpublished eleven manuscript volumes of "Extracts Concerning the Indians" that are now in the Morgan Library and which Thoreau gathered apparently in preparation for a book on the Indians which he never got around to writing. Unfortunately it is only a "representative sampling" (full publication is probably financially unfeasible now--and maybe ever), but this selection whets our appetite for more. Fleck also includes three expansions of journal entries for Jan. 4, 1855; May 25, 1858; and March 18, 1860, and parallels of passages in Walden and other books. It is unfortunate that in his bibliography Fleck includes "less than fifty per cent" of the Indian books Thoreau uses and even those he does cite are only sketchily identified....Richard Eaton's Flora of Concord does for the plants of Concord what Ludlow Griscom's Birds of Concord did for the birds--that is, it lists every species of plant known to have grown wild in Concord, tells where it has been found, its current status, whether or not Thoreau ever located it, etc. Thrown in for good measure is an excellent discussion of Thoreau as a botanist and a history of his herbarium. This is obviously a labor of love on Mr. Eaton's part, and the botanists of Concord and the students of Thoreau's botany are going to be indebted to him for many a year to come....The Illustrated Maine Woods is a beautiful example of bookmaking, with the authoritative Princeton Edition text, a special introduction by Joseph Moldenhauer and 48 Gleason photographs of Maine, most of them hitherto unpublished and beautifully reproduced (though we are puzzled why some of the photographs are of areas Thoreau did not visit)....

Note that the Illustrated Walden (in this same series) is now available in paperback at only \$3.95....

Marilynne Roach's The Mouse and the Song is a delightful little tale for children (ages 4-8) about the mouse that lives in Thoreau's cabin at Walden. It would be hard to imagine a children's story more simply and beautifully told in the spirit of HDT.... Kenneth Rhoads' "Thoreau: The Ear and the Music" is a very sensitive account of the place and importance of sound and music in Thoreau's life....Hendrick & Oehlschlaeger's catalog of the Jones exhibit heralds the major discovery recently by Hendrick of the long lost papers of Dr. Samuel Arthur Jones, the early Michigan disciple of Thoreau. It is a gold mine of new material including much correspondence between Jones and other early Thoreau enthusiasts that should be of vast importance to Thoreau scholars.... Perry Westbrook, in his John Burroughs, gives us a comprehensive survey of Burroughs' several essays on Thoreau and points out that his Pepacton was based on Thoreau's Week.

REMINISCENCES OF AUGUSTA BOWERS FRENCH

/Editor's Note: The following reminiscences, written at the age of eighty by a native of Concord, were called to our attention by Mrs. Marcia Moss and are here first printed with the kind permission of Mrs. French's granddaughters, Dorothea Yust Smith and Augusta Yust Hume of Chappaqua, New York./

I was born in Concord, Mass., in the year 1846 -

My father and his mother were keeping house together and Father took Mother right to their home - But Mother's father got the better of my father by buying this place and giving it to Mother as a wedding present -

Mother found the work very hard but Grandmother thought the cottage the nicest place in the world and "so easy to do the work" - A young maid who was helping Mother take care of her babies, remarked otto voce "Easy what you don't do it yourself" -

Our cottage was on a cross-road between the road leading to Lexington and the one leading to Lincoln - At one end of our street on the Lexington road lived George Heywood and his mother- His mother and my Grandmother were cousins- Just below the Heywood house, on the side hill, was the Minot home, a small black weather stained cottage which was built by my Grandmother's grandfather-- Dr. Prescott- It was in this house that my grandmother lived at the time of her marriage-

I have heard my mother say that Great, Great Grandfather Prescott took his daughter and her four children home- I suppose this was when her husband died- His name was Minot- After Great, Great Grandfather's death, the place belonged to my grandmother's sister and brother, Mary and George Minot-

Aunt Mary was a saint but Uncle George was a sinner- In a house full of women, it used to seem to me that Uncle George did all he could to make life unpleasant- He had rheumatism and he would go to bed early- and he would groan and groan and groan- He loved to scare us children- One day, after dark, when I had to go home alone, he told me to hurry, for there was an Indian hiding behind the big tree, to catch me- In this family was one man, Uncle George, all the rest women-

It was told, under the breath, that when young, Uncle George was engaged to marry a lovely girl named Lucy Potter- Miss Potter made her home with Aunt Mary, but she refused to marry Uncle George on account of

his foul temper- Sometimes, when he was having a tantrum, Aunt Mary had to call on Miss Potter to come and help- She could always calm him-

Well, next to the Minot house, came the little primary school- next the school, the home of Miss Mary Emerson--Aunt of Ralph Waldo Emerson- Mr. Emerson told my mother once that his Aunt Mary was a perpetual east wind- I read in the paper the other day, Mr. Emerson's definition of happiness and the first two things essential were "health" and a "south wind" Now the south wind in Concord was warm and mild--and the east wind just the reverse, blowing as it did from the ocean.

About half a mile below the Mary Emerson house, was one now known as the Alcott home- Where Louisa Alcott and her father spent their last days- and next came the home of the Hawthornes- Beyond that lived Ephraim Bull, who perfected the Concord grape- One day when I went down to see his daughter, Mary Ellen Bull, I found her in the greenhouse, snipping superfluous grapes from the bunches just forming- I suppose that gave symmetry to the bunch- and plenty of room for growth-

On the Lincoln end of our street lived Jabez Reynolds- and next on the road to Lincoln lived Charles Bartlett (?), then John Bent and then the poor house- Mr. Bent could hardly speak a sentence without an oath-- and he was nicknamed Hell Bent-

Beyond the poor house there were no houses - the road running past meadows, woods, Walden Pond and on into Lincoln town-

In my time, the schools consisted of a primary in different quarters of the town, which the nearby children attended- one intermediate and one high school in the town house on the first floor, and on the second floor, the town hall- where public meetings were held, and fairs and dances etc. and it was here that the Lyceum lectures were given-

Our little primary school was opposite the home of Ralph Waldo Emerson and every New Year's Mrs. Emerson invited the primary school children to come over and celebrate- When we left, each child was given a candy animal- and even now, the sight of a candy rooster thrills me and takes me back to Mrs. Emerson.

Miss Jane Hosmer was one of our teachers in the primary school- and her sister Abby Hosmer was teacher of Latin and Mathematics in the high school.. These ladies seemed to have a gift for teaching- and many a time, after becoming a teacher myself- I have felt grateful to her (Abby) for her thoroughness.

Concord had also a private school known as the Academy and was managed by a talented man, Frank B. Sanborn- At this time there was a great deal of talk about slavery- and every now and then we would hear that a slave had reached his freedom through the underground railroad- That used to puzzle me terribly- How could a railroad be underground- It seems to me now that "out of sight" would have been better- John Brown was at work and there was excitement and fear-

We had a pleasant custom in Concord of meeting at the post office at five o'clock to see the mail distributed. One day, my friend Ella Hosmer and I went to the depot to see the five o'clock train come in- and on our way down to the post office, we were asked by a stranger where the Middlesex Hotel was- There was no depot carriage at hand, so we volunteered to walk to the hotel with him- The man proved to be "John Brown."

Mr. Sanborn was interested in the slave question and he had been warned not to go out alone after dark- One evening a carriage stopped in front of his house- and the driver rang the bell and told Mr. Sanborn that some ladies in the carriage wished to speak to him. He walked down to the carriage, where he was suddenly seized and an effort made to push him into the carriage-

But some of his pupils happened to be passing and they lent a hand and called for help- Mr. Sanborn was a tall man and his long legs saved him- His would-be captors could not get him into the carriage and in no time the town was roused and Mr. Sanborn saved-

That night the father of my friend Ella started to go with the crowd. He was seen to waver and fall and when help reached him he was dead- This seemed to me much worse than what happened to Mr. Sanborn-

At the time when John Brown was hung, there was a mass meeting held in the town hall, which everyone attended, young and old- At one time two of John Brown's daughters came to Concord to attend the academy- I played hide and go seek many a time with Sarah (Brown)-

We did not have "movies" in those days- Our chief recreation through the fall and winter lay in the Lyceum and the Library- Every Wednesday evening we attended a lecture in the town hall, and every Saturday evening we went to the library returning the books we had taken out the Saturday before-

We were certainly taught that a good education was far more to be desired than wealth- With such people as Emerson and Hawthorne, Louisa M. Alcott and her father, Thoreau, and many other lesser lights-

I think my mother did not like Mr. Thoreau very well- did not approve his actions- One day as he was passing, Mother saw him and remarked "It would look better if Henry Thoreau stayed at home and helped his parents instead of idling away his time at Walden"- But I guess Henry made more money with his books than he ever could have made working at home-

Many distinguished men visited Concord during these days- Oliver Wendell Holmes, Charles Sumner, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Wendell Phillips and others- Also Margaret Fuller and Miss Elizabeth Peabody- Horace Mann was a resident, with his three sons- The youngest son, Ben, was so interested in natural history that we nicknamed him "Bug"- Bug was always catching flies and wasps and bees- and concealing them in his desk at school- He sat next to me so I know-

Mr. and Mrs. Hawthorne had three children- the eldest Una, then Julian and Rose- When I knew Rose she was a plump little red-haired girl- full of life- Late in life she joined a sisterhood and spent her time for the relief of people afflicted with cancer- A week or so ago we noticed her death in a daily paper-

Mr. Emerson had three children, Ellen, Edith & Edward- My friend Ella and I thought Edith the most beautiful girl ever created. With two long braids of dark hair, reaching below her waist and her white teeth and red cheeks, she was certainly a rare and radiant maiden-

At this time the slave question became very acute and there were rumors of war and finally a call was made for men to serve in the army for three months- My father volunteered and marched to war with the three months men- But it took longer than that to put down the rebellion- And now the call was for three years- My father recruited a company of which he was captain and my eighteen year old brother Charlie joined the company as a corporal- When the company was ready, they marched from Concord to West Cambridge and there camped till the time came for them to be transported by water to the scene of the war- The day they started, the Company stopped at our home, and were served coffee, etc. and I remember my father hastened into the house as they were getting ready to leave- And he kissed my little brother who was asleep on his bed- Poor father! I know he felt

that he might never see his little boy again-

My oldest brother William also served in a nine months regiment- His regiment was called the Seed Cake Regiment, because so many of the boys belonged to wealthy families and expected more than they got- My brother told of one boy who was just longing for candy- So he wrote his mother for some- He expected chocolate cream drops and soft candies- instead his mother sent hard things that would not crush- When the boy opened his postage and saw the contents- he said "Well I will say one damn for the candy"-

The war continued for several years- My 18 year old brother was very badly wounded in the Battle of Gettysburg- and was sent home- After the first agony of his wound was over, he really enjoyed being sick- for all the girls of his acquaintance came to see him and his bright and particular girl tore up her under clothes to make bandages for him.

A relief society was formed which met in the vestry of the Unitarian Church and we young girls learned to make mittens with a fore finger on the right hand one- You can guess what that was for- and I remember making a very respectable pair of slippers out of carpeting- The soles and uppers were cut out and we bound them with tape- And then we sewed them over and over together-

It is pleasant now to look back on those 18 years of life in Concord and know that we had only two ministers in our Unitarian Church- Mr. Frost, whom I barely remember, and Mr. Grindell (?) Reynolds- We had some talented men in our town church, but Mr. Emerson and family attended the Swedenborgian Church in Waltham- and usually on Sunday some of the Emerson family drove to Waltham in their own carriage-

I think of Mr. Emerson as perhaps the kindest man I ever knew- He had an expression of gentleness and when he met an acquaintance his face lighted up into a smile- I have among my papers a testimonial which he wrote for me when I first began my business of teaching- He also wrote a letter of introduction to Mr. John Bryant, a brother of William Cullen Bryant- a resident of Princeton, Ill., where I was to teach-

Mr. Emerson spoke to everyone- On the contrary, Mr. Hawthorne always walked with head bowed and eyes on the ground- But he was seldom seen on the street- Mr. Alcott was another most lovable man- He used to come to our high school and hold what he termed Conversations- He gave us good advice-

He was a vegetarian and would not eat meat- The story is told that a neighbor one day sent Mrs. Alcott a nice roast of beef- When Mr. Alcott saw it, he picked it up and threw it out of the window- Perhaps he did- but more likely he didn't- It did not seem like him-

I have not seen Concord in several years- but my father and mother and all my brothers and sisters except one are resting in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery-

My sight is almost gone and I cannot read what I have written- But I am writing for my Grandchildren-

Augusta B. French

November 2nd, 1926

Many of our literary townspeople were interested in our schools- Louisa Alcott often wrote verses for the High School when there was to be a public entertainment- I recall one verse of a little poem-

"And one there comes among us

With counsels wise and mild,

With snow upon his forehead,

But at heart a very child."

Miss Alcott had reference to her father- I can see Miss Alcott now, breezy and snappy and using a lot of slang- I also see Henry Thoreau with bowed head, on his way to Walden Pond- Mr. Hawthorne also with head down, speaking to no one and seeing no one- Mr. Emerson, with

bowed head, but seeing everything and missing no one--and Mr. Alcott, head bowed, but always raised to greet a friend--

THE ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the Thoreau Society will be held in Concord, Mass., at the First Parish Church on Saturday, July 12, 1975. William Howarth of Princeton, N.J. will serve as president. Speaker of the day will be Annie Dillard, author of *PILGRIM AT TINKER CREEK*. Further details of the meeting will be given in the spring bulletin.

NOMINATIONS FOR OFFICERS

President William Howarth has appointed a nominating committee consisting of Thomas Blanding, Mary Gail Fenn, and William H. Harrison. Suggestions for nominations for the society's officers should be sent immediately to the chairman, Thomas Blanding, at 6 Princeton Road, Hopewell, N.J. 08525. Their report will be given in the spring bulletin.

THE THOREAU SOCIETY OF JAPAN

Professor Koh Kasegawa, who is secretary for East Japan of the Japanese Thoreau society summarizes its history so far:

We have had meetings of the Society twelve times so far: May, 1966, in Tokyo; Oct., 1966, at Sendai; May, 1967, at Kobe; May, 1968, in Tokyo; May, 1969, at Kyoto; Oct., 1969, at Kanazawa; June, 1971, at Okayama; Sept., 1972, at Sendai; Oct., 1973, at Zentsūji, Shikoku; April 1974, in Tokyo, and Oct. 1974, in Sendai.

May, 1966: Kodo Yahagi on Some Problems in Thoreau Studies; T. Yamasaki on Thoreau's "Civil Disobedience"---Mainly about Its Studies. Oct., 1966: Yukimasa Koderu on *Walden*: Its Values in English Teaching; Tōru Okamoto on A Nature Lover (John Clare) with Relation to Thoreau. May, 1967: G. Saito on A Profile of a Thoreauvian (H. West); M. Higashiyama on Thoreau and Ricketson; K. Kasegawa on Thoreau and Whitman (as speaker from the Whitman Society). May, 1968: Toshihiko Ogata on "A Plea for Captain John Brown." May, 1969: Tsutomu Shigematsu on Thoreau's Conscience in "A Plea for Captain John Brown;" Charles Anderson on The Magic Circle of *Walden*. Oct., 1969: Keijiro Unoki on Thoreau: Not Deceived by His Geographical Environment; Masayuki Sakamoto on The Spiritual Pilgrimage in Thoreau. June, 1971: Shōei Ando on Thoreau's "Satori" (Spiritual Awakening). Sept., 1972: Yuji Nakata on Thoreau and Today. Oct., 1973: G. Saito on Boston's Intellectuals before Thoreau's Day; K. Kasegawa on A Reconsideration of Thoreau's Wilderness Concept; Minoru Iida on The Two Naturalists' Views of Art: Thoreau and Akahiko (Shimagi). April, 1974: Hisae Miwa on Thoreau's Communion with Nature--His Sense Perception; Makoto Rokugawa on The Two Aspects of Thoreau's View of Nature in *Walden*. Oct., 1974: Prof. Nyui on Thoreau's Plants in Kokkaido; Kodo Yakogu.

NOTES AND QUERIES....

We are indebted to the following for information used in this bulletin: M. Ames, T. Bailey, A. Black, W. Botorff, G. Boudreau, M. Campbell, W. Cummings, S. Davidson, J. Donovan, M. G. Fenn, F. Flack, V. Frieson, R. Ganley, B. Gatewood, G. Hasenauer,

C. Hoagland, J. Huber, E. Johnson, D. Kamen-Kaye, K. Kasegawa, A. Kovar, T. McCone, D. McWilliams, R. Needham, T. O'Donnell, P. Oehser, E. Schofield, H. Schon, J. Vickers, A. Volkman, P. Williams, and D. Yannella.

New life members of the society are J. Parker Huber of Willimantic, Conn., Douglas Noverr of East Lansing, Mich., and Jean Ellen Teresko of Yardley, Pa. Life membership is fifty dollars.

Jurisdiction over the Walden Pond reservation was officially transferred from Middlesex County to the Massachusetts Department of Natural Resources in a ceremony at the pond on January 7, 1975.

"Though Now the Wind Blows," a performance based on readings from the letters and journals of Emerson and Thoreau was presented at the Performing Arts Center in Concord on Nov. 30, 1974. Christopher Childs took the part of Thoreau.

We are grieved to announce the death of Herbert Faulkner West, the second president of the Thoreau Society, in Hanover, N. H., on November 9, 1974.

Unfortunately, some type of mishap occurred to our society's membership records last spring. If your mailings have been misaddressed or your membership expiration date has been confused, please let us know so that we can make appropriate corrections.

In response to our summer bulletin query about where Thoreau said, "The groves were God's first temples," Robert Weathersby, Cortland R. Davis, D. H. Shepard, and Robert F. Needham point out that the line is from William Cullen Bryant's "Forest Hymn," and not from Thoreau at all.

Mary Gail Fenn, in answer to other queries, points out that "Man's moral nature is a riddle which only eternity can solve" is in Thoreau's journal for March 19, 1842, and that he uses the phrase "shores of spring" in his journal for Feb. 2, 1854, where he says, "When you have weathered that January, you get into the gulf-stream of winter, nearer the shores of spring."

As to Thoreau's referring to baseball, Lloyd S. Jenkins and Mary Gail Fenn cite his journal for April 10, 1856--"Fast Day.--Some fields are dried sufficiently for games of ball with which this season is commonly ushered in. I associate this day...with games of baseball played over behind the hills in the russet fields towards Sleepy Hollow." And Samuel Wellman adds that in his journal for Nov. 16, 1858, speaking of clergymen, Thoreau says, "If they have any manhood they are sure to forsake the ministry, though they turn their attention to baseball." Sam also points out that in his journal for April 24, 1859, Thoreau speaks of "hawkie" which is apparently a reference to "hockey."

Edward Emerson, in his *Henry Thoreau as Remembered by a Young Friend* (p. 57), quotes Thoreau as saying, "It is not that we love to be alone, but that we love to soar, and, when we do soar, the company grows thinner and thinner, till there is none at all." Peggy Clifford of Aspen, Col., asks where this can be found in Thoreau's writings.

Harold Gregory of Worcester, Mass., has written a play, "Freedom's Partner Freedom's Choice" for the bicentennial which includes Thoreau as a character.

Michael McCurdy has made a wood-engraving of the Dunshee ambrotype of Thoreau. Matted copies may be obtained from the Penmaen Press, Old Sudbury Road, Lincoln, Mass. 01773 for \$25.00.

Cody's Book Store of Berkeley, Calif. 94702, have produced their annual broadside calendar of quotations from Thoreau. The 1975 issue, entitled "Nutting" may be purchased from them postpaid for \$1.00.

Paul Tsongas, who was elected to Congress from Massachusetts in 1974, advertised prominently in his

campaign literature that as a Middlesex County Commissioner "he saved Walden Pond."

MORE DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS ON THOREAU.

With the permission of the University of Microfilms of Ann Arbor, Mich., we continue printing here with reproductions of abstracts of dissertations on Thoreau. The full dissertations are available from University Microfilms at the prices given at the ends of the abstracts:

SELECTED ANTI-SLAVERY SPEECHES OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU, 1848-1859: A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS

Michael Glenn ERLICH, Ph.D.
The Ohio State University, 1970

Adviser: Professor James Golden

The purpose of this study was to determine in what manner Thoreau's unique qualities as a speaker were reflected in "Civil Disobedience," "Slavery in Massachusetts" and in defense of John Brown. Thoreau's anti-slavery remarks were considered more as a campaign than as isolated persuasive efforts. The aim of this work, furthermore, was to demonstrate how Thoreau's general philosophy of social reform was mirrored by speaking out on that issue which every man had to either confront or avoid: the peculiar institution of chattel slavery.

The text was divided into seven chapters. Chapter I set forth the purpose of the study and its critical method. Chapter II was devoted to a general background of Thoreau's age. It was in no way comprehensive; rather, social, economic and spiritual characteristics in New England were emphasized because Thoreau the speaker and philosopher was the product of an intellectual and moral renaissance. Chapter III dealt with the "formative" years of Thoreau, which extended from 1817 to 1848. Attention was paid particularly to Thoreau's early exposure to anti-slavery and transcendental influences.

Chapters IV and V were devoted to a rhetorical analysis of "Civil Disobedience" and "Slavery in Massachusetts." In "Civil Disobedience," delivered in 1848, Thoreau made public the rationale for going to jail rather than pay the Massachusetts poll tax. "Slavery in Massachusetts," delivered in 1854, was designed to stir Thoreau's native State into secession. And so long as the State delayed in its moral duty, each inhabitant was urged to dissolve his union with it. From a careful consideration of the two speeches, four rhetorical strategies emerged: revelation, transcendence, salvation and omission. Each address, moreover, reflected Thoreau's philosophy of social reform. His gospel of moral laissez faire cautioned each individual to test for himself the advantages and disadvantages of various laws and customs in a complex society. Each man was charged to obey his conscientious preference, not those laws sustained by physical force or tradition. Thoreau's answer to a civil law or system of laws outrageous to his conscience was peaceful disobedience. The man, then, who wished to undermine the state need only cease to cooperate with it.

Chapter VI, "A Plea in Defense of Captain John Brown," was examined in terms of a classical analysis--invention, organization, style and delivery. The occasion for this speech demanded that Thoreau be heard, and he abandoned the strategies which had proven ineffective with popular audiences. Thoreau

thought of Brown as a man of rare common sense, transcendentalist above all, and as a man of ideas and principles. Thoreau's task was to awaken his neighbors to the nobility of Brown's assault on Harper's Ferry. By 1859, passive resistance was no longer the only means of reform acceptable to Thoreau.

Chapter VII consisted of a review of the dissertation and evaluated Thoreau's major anti-slavery speeches from 1848 to 1859. Nowhere are Thoreau's qualities as a speaker or the reforms which he advocated better represented than in his major anti-slavery speeches. Nowhere was respect for the individual more pronounced than in Thoreau's anti-slavery crusade. In each address he protested not only against slavery and a government that countenanced the "peculiar institution" but, in the name of human dignity and individuality, criticized the trends toward conformity, restrictiveness and mechanization. This criticism was perhaps Thoreau's greatest achievement and our legacy.

Order No. 71-7446, 341 pages.

AN EARLY REVIEW OF THOREAU'S WEEK (From an unidentified newspaper)

A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS. By Henry D. Thoreau.

We are glad to see a book that may be safely recommended as a prophylactic of the California fever. It is moreover a healthy and harmless stimulant to those who are removed from the circle of infection. The boy who is wild with the idea of sleeping in a tent and cooking his own dinner, will here find pointed out a readier and cheaper outlet for his enthusiasm than the "overland route"—with the added merit of increased facilities for repentance during a rain storm. To the sick heart and fevered brain, parched up by the thirst for the "golden streams," this book, if read aright, should be as cool and pure as the fall of dew in summer nights. It is a revelation to such, of the absolute non-essentialness of wealth to a man's happy life. It is the old Greek legend of Diogenes and his tub—honorably and gracefully realized in New England. Its author is a scholar and a naturalist, neither dissipated nor misanthropic, with abilities of hand and head, which, tried by the severest standard of ledger and day book, would be found peculiarly available—one who has not been pushed aside nor left behind in the race of life, but who has calmly stepped apart from the tyrannous control of circumstances, to live after the fashion most congenial to him.

The seemingly slight material that the title page of this book promises, is worked up with a prodigal ingenuity. It is worth while to read it, if only to see how rich the lives of some men may be. The grain of gold has been drawn out into its miles of shining wire, and yet has not been attenuated.

From the author's door in Concord, up to the head of *Canoe Navigation* on the Merrimack, we float along with the voyagers—the whole scene almost as distinct to us as to them. With more fidelity and artistic skill than Champney or Bunvard, Mr. Thoreau paints his river panorama, and in the pauses of his unrolling scrolls, he will tell you tales of his former wanderings, and unfold the pages of his genius and graceful criticism—the free thoughts of one who has not learned of reviews or newspapers, but has lived alone with nature and the best books of the olden time. You shall have the secret history of the fishes in the stream and the flowers on the banks—you shall look into the pleasant New England farm-house and see the faces of the dwellers on the soil, quiet and unfevered, and unlike the nomadic, transitory townsman. If you have ever taken up the knapsack and "wandered off" for a week or two of summer weather, you will find this volume the echo of your still pleasantly remembered experiences. You will long for a guide here, one to whom the manifold mysteries of nature are open as the signs of the sky and the mean in the pilt.

"It seemed that Nature could not rise
A plant in any secret place.
In quaking bog, on snowy hill,
Beneath the grass that shades the rill;
Render the snow beneath the rocks.
In damp fields, known to bird and fox,
But he would come there very hour
It opened in its virgin bowers,
As if a sunbeam showed the place,
And left the long descended race."

If you would learn more of Thoreau, read the whole description of him (from which the above is quoted) in the first part of Emerson's "wood notes." Since Gilbert White wrote his "Natural History of Selborne" there has appeared no such book.

We wish we could stop here, but there remains a word to be said. The poetry of the book is all confined to its prose; the hard ungrateful prose is measured off into lines and disguised by lyrical semihumanities. With one or two exceptions Mr. Thoreau's rhymes might be spared.

There is something too, objectionable in the religious philosophy of the book, but luckily the objection goes only to the philosophy. In some books the good and evil are inextricably mingled—the error is implied rather than professed, is insinuated like the poison of the Borgias in sweet wine, is the logical consequence of seemingly innocent premises too hastily granted. But in this book, the peculiar speculations of the author stand by themselves. They may be absolutely skipped. They will be easily and naturally overlooked. The eye glances at them and then on to more attractive matter as if they were pages of another book carelessly bound up in this. Moreover, if read never so carefully, we cannot conceive of their doing harm. Neither by argument nor ridicule, or by anything more than mere profession does Mr. Thoreau present his philosophy. We should no more fear the "dangerous tendencies of this book" to propagate Pantheism than that the image of the Goddess of Liberty on our coin, would tend to revive her Pagan worship.

We would gladly make extracts from this volume did we know where to turn. But at every page something so fresh and sparkling catches the eye, that we must either give or leave the whole rather than settle the question of precedence. We read at school, moreover, the story of the simpleton—the Greek "Till Eulenspiegel"—who brought a brick as a sample of his house—and have always interpreted it into a prophetic sarcasm on reviewers.

But let the reader see for himself. Such books—like the night-blooming Cereus, unfold but seldom—they pass unnoticed unless their coming be watched for, and they fade quickly from before the public eye. Their evanescence is one condition of their rare and peculiar beauty, and he who lets the hour of their effervescence go by will hardly know the pleasure he has missed.